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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ID](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: KEY GOI ADVISER ON REOPENING EMBASSY IN BAGHDAD

REF: A. JAKARTA 1613
[1](#)B. 07 JAKARTA 2539

Classified By: DCM John A. Heffern, reasons 1.4(b+d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: According to Alwi Shihab, the President's Special Adviser for the Middle East, Indonesian President Yudhoyono urged the Department of Foreign Affairs (DEPLU) months ago to re-open the Indonesian embassy in Baghdad. Shihab said he believed that DEPLU was delaying the opening of the embassy because of debt repayment issues. DCM urged the GOI to move forward with its plans. Shihab said he would discuss the matter with the President. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Shihab told DCM on October 23 that Indonesia was trying to increase its trade with Iraq and that President Yudhoyono had instructed Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda some time ago to send an ambassador to Baghdad and reopen its mission there. When Wirajuda seemed reluctant to do so, Yudhoyono said that if Wirajuda could not find a diplomat to take the position, he would appoint a general. DCM commented that the government of Iraq wanted Indonesia represented in Baghdad and that the Indonesian presence could help Iraq see Indonesia as a model to follow on the road to democracy and multi-ethnic stability. Observing that opening an embassy now would send an important political signal, Shihab said DEPLU was routinely slow and that similar delays had arisen in Indonesia's preparations to open an embassy in Oman.

[1](#)3. (C) DCM related how the United States had assisted a delegation headed by DEPLU Secretary General Imron Cotan on a visit to Baghdad earlier this year (Ref B). Cotan had subsequently linked the opening of an Indonesian embassy to Iraq's repayment of Indonesian debt, although more recently DEPLU had said it would not insist on full repayment (Ref A).

DCM noted that other debtors had accepted proportional reimbursement and urged that Indonesia do the same. Shihab commented that the debt could be paid off with the revenues from the additional trade generated by opening an embassy and said he would advise Yudhoyono to push ahead with his plans.

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